



Legislative Secretary Diana Dooley confers with Assemblymen Richard Robinson, left, and Dennis Mangers outside the assembly chambers.

Gently Twisting Arms For Jerry



As Brown's lobbyist, Dooley is in continual contact with the state's 120 legislators.

By Bob Sylva
Bee Staff Writer

DURING STAFF MEETINGS, Jerry Brown dutifully gets her coffee.

That's clout. Once casually dismissed as a "lightweight," she's now considered the most powerful woman in the Brown Administration. "She gets him the (governor) to do things that nobody else can do," says one department head in amazement. "He's terrified of her!"

Looks must be deceiving then. For she has a sweet, heart-shaped face, honey-colored hair, soft blue eyes, and a dazzling smile that could turn even fossilized Republicans into go-with-the-flow Democrats. She's a lot of things that her boss Jerry Brown isn't: warm, exuberant, well-liked — as well as seven months pregnant.

Diana Dooley gently plops down on the lumpy couch in her small office in the State Capitol, located just down the hall from the governor's. She shifts her weight around and tries to get comfortable. It's the last day of the current legislative session and she couldn't be more pleased. As Gov. Brown's new legislative secretary — appointed this past January — Dooley has been battling in the trenches, trying to salvage both Brown's faltering legislative programs and dwindling prestige.

At only 28, Dooley has the major job of serving as Brown's chief lobbyist to the state Legislature. It is a liaison position, of sorts, in which she not only promotes Brown's pet programs, but also acts as a conduit of communication — sometimes the only one — between the governor's office and the 120 legislators.

DOOLEY'S IS GENERALLY regarded to be the toughest job in the entire administration. It's made all the more so by the level of popularity that the governor currently enjoys with the assembly and senate members. Indeed, as one wag put it once, Brown has about as much influence in the legislature as the Shah has in Iran. Consequently, oftentimes Dooley's job has been about as thrilling as being a blood sacrifice. For this she gets paid \$42,696 a year.

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Dooley

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greater if something else could have been done, or if his involvement could have affected the outcome."

Yet, there have been some pluses this year. Dooley is proud to point out. "All the governor's perceived pet projects, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Arts Commission, the Office of Planning and Research, were approved and funded."

How does Gov. Brown express his appreciation? "He's not filled with glowing praise, when there are successes," says Dooley. "He takes the attitude that 'that's your job.'" Yet, she smiles, "He's very charming with me. His approval is usually exhibited in a backward kind of way...a (oblique) comment or phrase." Dooley says that Brown "is a very shy man on a personal level. When there's an issue involved, he'll talk about it. But rarely do I see him being very personal."

She recalls the time that the fact she was pregnant was reported in the newspaper. Dooley was upset because she hadn't had an opportunity to tell her boss. So she went into Brown's office, told him, and he replied: "That's your personal life. You don't have to share it with me."

"I felt awkward," says Dooley, "to talk about myself, or to talk about him. That's not what our relationship is based on. I feel a very professional relationship. I do my thing and he does his." Yet, Dooley does allow, "I think he's a lot warmer and caring about people than is commonly perceived."

WORKING FOR Gov. Brown, in a professional context at least, is tremendously exciting, says Dooley. "He's a very uncommon person," she notes. "He's totally fascinating. His intellectual capacity is phenomenal, and his appetite for information is insatiable. He'll pick at some minute detail in a bill and remember it being considered three years ago. It's challenging to the staff because he can come up with questions to their reports."

Which may or may not be an always enjoyable experience. "The questioning is so intense," says Dooley. "There will be a litany of three, four questions...almost badgering. But that's as fast as they are coming to his mind." Dooley says this thinking-out-loud process is something the governor habitually goes through. Some people find it intimidating, says Dooley. "I've always found it fascinating."

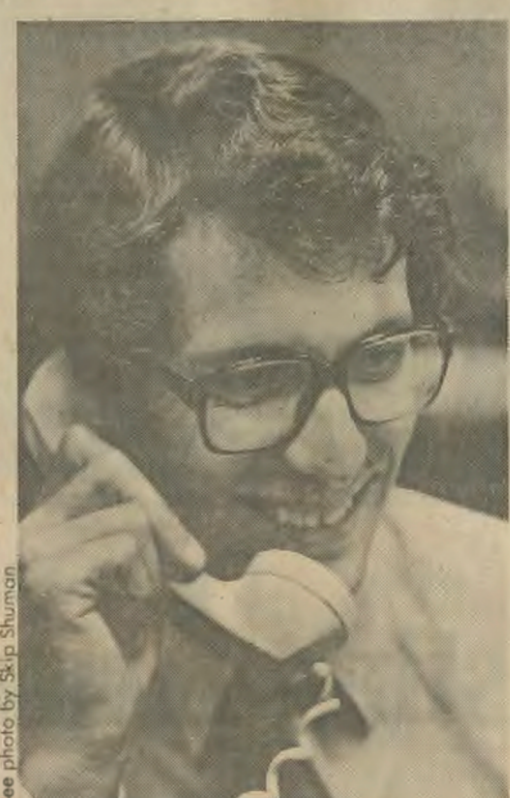
On occasion, Dooley also takes her job as legislative lobbyist home with her. She and her husband, Dan, enjoy entertaining, and frequently invite legislators home for dinner. Most members are more than eager to escape the "Frank Fats syndrome" for an evening.

Not to stretch credulity, but in some respects Dooley appears to even serve as a surrogate wife for the bachelor governor. She knows how to socialize and entertain. Brown doesn't. Before the July recess Dooley came up with the idea that she help

Brown host a couple of parties in her back yard for the Democratic legislators.

"The session ended with a lot of acrimony that I wanted to dissipate," she says. "You can't ignore that. You have to take steps to even things out." A party seemed like a good idea to pull people together. She notes, however, that "entertaining is frustrating for Brown."

Both affairs were considered smash successes. The reason being is that legislators showed up in the first place. Most people credit Dooley's popularity for that. The senate had lasagne from Corti Bros., and the assembly cold cuts from Pennisi's.

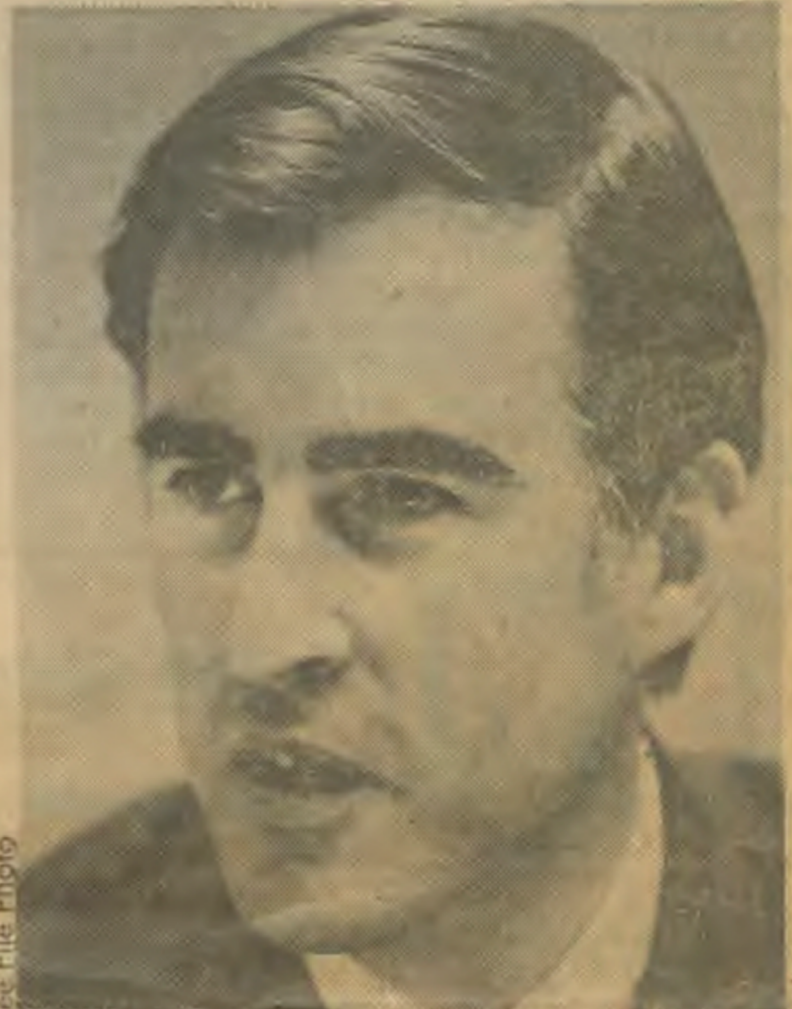


Dan Dooley, the other member of the "dynamic Dooley duo."

They also churned homemade ice cream, quite a departure from the governor's usual fare.

Yet, even in the privacy of Dooley's backyard, the governor was his somewhat eccentric self. "His idea of small talk is to ask a member what bill he's working on," laughs Dooley. "He never puts his business aside." Shaking her head in amazement, Dooley says of Brown, "He just doesn't have what

As Gov. Brown's legislative lobbyist, 28-year-old Diana Dooley is considered the most powerful woman in the administration. Warm, sensitive and well-liked, her effectiveness in the state Legislature has given her credibility and clout with the governor.



Dooley is conscientious in her work for Gov. Brown, even hosting backyard parties for the governor.

Yet, the vicissitudes of her boss notwithstanding, Dooley has had other problems to overcome. One was her age. The other was her sex. Both combined to create an issue of credibility. Dooley, who had worked as a deputy lobbyist for Brown for two and a half years prior to her appointment to the top slot, was suddenly entering exclusive, wingtip territory. Her predecessors — Marc Poche, Tony Dougherty, and colleague B.T. Collins, who many thought to be the natural successor to the job after Dougherty left to join Brown's campaign committee, were all men. Worse, all were lawyers. Dooley had a serious problem being taken seriously.

"AT THE BEGINNING of this job there was the feeling (among legislators) that I didn't have credibility with the governor," explains Dooley. "I think many have changed their view."

The reason being, she says, is because she has made a deliberate effort to befriend each legislator, become knowledgeable about their districts, and sensitive to their special interests and problems. "What I have tried to do is foster a feeling of reliability," says Dooley. "That there is someone here that members can count on: that they have access and an avenue for their views which get into the governor. In general terms, I have been successful in establishing that reaction in people."

As for being a woman, Dooley says her problems were compounded by the fact that she was a young woman. "This is not just a boys' system," says Dooley of the legislature, particularly the senate, "but an old boys' system." She complains of not being taken seriously, at least in the beginning, by the members, as well as having to fend off "crass sexual advances." Yet, trying to emphasize the positive, Dooley points out, "There are certain kinds of relationships that women have with men that have advantages to them. It's offensive to me that I'm not as threatening to a man, but there are benefits — like access."

With her engaging personality, genuine sincerity and eagerness to help — plus access — just how effective of an advocate has Dooley been for Brown?

"She's intelligent, warm, sensitive to your legislative concerns. She doesn't try to stonewall, and

you feel like you are getting heard," says Howard Berman (D-Los Angeles), assembly majority floor leader. "You can get a direct answer from her. She handles herself just as well, if not better, than her predecessors." Berman is convinced that Dooley has direct access to the governor.

B.T. Collins, who was himself extremely well liked when he served as Brown's lobbyist to the assembly, says Dooley is "doing an excellent job in a very difficult situation." Collins, who says his rather unique approach to legislative lobbying was "to bring a donkey along, put in a nickle, have them say their spiel on the issue, and then say, 'OK, let's talk politics!'" notes, as contrast, that Dooley is "so damn thorough it makes you sick!"

Collins says Dooley's success is apparent by the fact that Brown is seeing more legislators than ever before, and that some of his bills are getting through. "I never got a bill through," says a chagrined Collins. "She (Dooley) is the worst thing that ever happened to my ego."

Lou Papan (D-San Mateo), hard-driving assemblyman who singlehandedly engineered an override of the governor's veto of his insurance bill, says matter-of-factly: "She does the governor a lot of good, that lady. Which is more than I can say for him."

Dooley, who admits that the "frustration level" in the legislature was extremely high this session, had her hands full fending off a number of legislative fights. Brown got bloodied on more than one occasion. Aside from Papan's override, the governor received two other overrides at the hands of the California State Employees Association over the issue of state employee pay raises. Dooley, who was working 15-16 hour days during that dispute, says she was "very, very disappointed" at the outcome. But she rightfully feels, in that particular instance, the battle went way beyond her.

HOW DOES Gov. Brown handle defeat? "He takes things about as non-personally as anybody around here," says Dooley. "He'll say: 'Hell, we did the best we could.' His attitude is that it's a 'professional disagreement.'"

But Dooley says, "I find his frustration is often

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people typically think of as personal relationships with people. He just doesn't have them."

DOOLEY, WHO'S from Hanford — a small farming town near Fresno — is living an exciting life almost out of a storybook, albeit a political one. She and her husband, who is only 28 himself, and the \$43,000-per-year deputy director of the Department of Food and Agriculture, were high school sweethearts who have been married now for seven and a half years. While he went to law school, she worked as a secretary.

She eventually got a job with the State Personnel Department, and later went to work for Marty Morgenstern in the Office of Employee Relations, before joining the governor's staff. Together, Diana and Dan, the "dynamic Dooley duo," are the youngest, highest paid, highest ranking couple in state government.

ADMITTING THAT their apparent good fortune is attributable to extremely good timing, Diana Dooley says it hasn't all been easy. Working at the State Capitol has its liabilities. Namely pressure. She says: "The pressure to succeed and the pressure of failure. You are always counting on other people for support, and your own persuasiveness for success. Everybody is doing that."

Consequently, she says, there is a real problem in "maintaining one's self-esteem and personal worth. That is a real challenge in this particular occupation. This building is a real pressure cooker to personal values, and how people feel about themselves."

At the outset she was less than self-confident. To convey the impression of competency, she even considered putting her hair in a bun, and buying a couple of blazers.

"The thought that I would be here (State Capitol) is a dream," says Dooley. "I never even expected to go to college. I thought I'd be a teacher, thinking that's what women do. I was scared to death at the Personnel Board. I thought I was 'over my head...that someone would see me for the fraud that I was. Every job that I've had, I felt like it was over my head. I feel good now. I feel like I have my feet underneath me."

She gives a lot of credit to her husband Dan. "He's so incredible supportive," says Dooley. "He describes our relationship to me as being one of 'mutual dependence.'" A facet of which entails understanding. Dooley believes that the often extreme pressures on their marriage are lessened somewhat by the fact that each has an understanding of the other's job. "It's important that a person appreciates the pressures that the other is facing," says Dooley. The marriages that she has seen split



A seven-months-pregnant Dooley with Sen. Jerry Smith in the Capitol.

up at the Capitol have usually suffered for lack of that sensitivity.

'I never thought I could do both... have a career and a family...'

AS TO THEIR future, there's their child due late November. "I keep saying, 'if it arrives by Thanksgiving, I will be quite thankful,'" laughs Dooley. They're both hoping for a girl.

After the baby is born, Dooley intends to return to work next January when the legislature reconvenes. Desiring to breastfeed, she's seriously considering taking her baby to work with her. That should constitute an unusual, if healthy, addition to Gov. Brown's office.

"I never thought I could do both," says Dooley, preferring to having both a career and a family. "As I pursued a career, I thought I shouldn't have a family. Now I know I can do both," she smiles.

"I feel very, very lucky."